

**English Talent Development Programme Introduction:**

This document will provide an outline to the new English Talent Development programme for swimming, (including open water). It details how the Amateur Swimming Association's (ASA) framework will work towards a seamless pathway for talented English swimmers and support staff to help fulfil their potential.

In the initial stages the English Talent Development Programme will be focussing on three areas: a) National and Regional Talent programmes, b) Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence [AASE] and c) Strengthening Club Networks.

**A1 National and Regional Talent Programmes:**

- Talented swimmers will be identified and tracked through the stages of the programme.
- The swimmer centred process will focus on developing the skills and attributes that are required to provide “more complete” swimmers.
- A structured programme that will dovetail into British Swimming World Class programme.

The England Talent Development programme is split into three levels with levels 1 and 2 delivered in each of the eight ASA regions. The clinics/camps are being held approximately three months apart on same weekends across the country during September, January and April.

Level 1: Comprises of 3 x 1 day clinics, targeted at 12 and 13 year old athletes [ages as ASA National Age Championships].

Level 2: Comprises of 3 x 2 day camps, targeted at 14 and 15 year old athletes [Age as ASA Age/Youth Championships].

Level 3: Is a national programme for English swimmers, outside of the World Class programme and comprises of a weekend and one week event camp, held each year. The English camps will coincide, where possible, with identified British Swimming camps. This is a measure aimed at reducing the disruption to “home club” programmes.

In the first year, we envisage there being six event camps being held in early April [at the same time as the British Swimming camp, in Swansea]. The themes of these camps will be: Sprint Freestyle, Distance F/S and Open Water, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley.

At levels 1 and 2 we are developing a series of educational activities targeted at developing skills on nutrition, time/lifestyle management and mental skills. These aspects will focussed on developing elite athlete attributes and include some practical elements, which will be further developed on the national event camps. As part of the regional programmes of clinics and camps every participant will be measured and monitored. From this “screening” the English programmes staff will ensure that “feedback” is sent to each athletes “home coach” on changes in the athletes anthropological profile. This tracking system will allow us to identify from an early stage, individuals who have “Podium characteristics” and predict potential barriers [related to growth] and advise on interventions that will prevent “breakdown” or retarding progress.

Progression through the programme is dependant upon a number of factors including demonstrated performance and commitment levels. Athletes unwilling to commit to levels of volumes and attendance outlined within the principles of LTAD will not move to levels 2 to 3 of the programme. This will also apply to swimmers wishing to be accepted onto the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) programme for 2007 and selection criteria for this level will be from the British progression curve to World Class performance. (see below for more on AASE).

### **Selection for National and Regional Clinics and Camps**

Swimmers will be initially identified from competition performances at the ASA National Age/Youth Championships. These selections will be based on performances across a range of Olympic events and judged against the British points progression curve for World Class performances and for the younger swimmers BAGCAT points. The second stage of selection is made by the “Regional Coaches Forums”.

The Regional Coaches Forums will be established from a panel of coaches and representatives identified by each ASA region, in conjunction with the Regional Talent Development Coaches. These panels will “top up” selections to their regional programmes from a wider range of performances.

There will be approximately 24 places available in each region at level 1 and 20 places at level 2 in each region. Meaning that 352 talent development opportunities at levels 1 and 2 in England.

The National event camps will provide at least 48 talent opportunities, bringing the total of development opportunities to 400.

Additionally, the AASE programme has places for 100 student scholars per year [over a two year programme].

This represents a significant increase in opportunities available for developing swimmers in England.

### **B] Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence [AASE]**

The AASE programme is a government backed educational programme overseen by the “Learning Skills Council” and is linked to NVQ at level 3, which is the equivalent of an “A” level. This programme is undertaken over two years and the Regional Talent Development Coaches (RTDCs), act as the assessors for the elements in the course.

In the first year of the programme; swimming has enrolled over 70 students, who are combining the practical elements of this course with “A” levels, B.Tec course, Vocational training or Core Skills courses.

The selection policy for the September 2007 inductees will be published in early January and potential students will be interviewed prior to taking a place on this programme.

### **C] Strengthening Club Networks**

In order to maximise the opportunities for English swimmers to develop to their potential, we need to develop a comprehensive network of club/local authority/school and commercial agency programmes, which are ‘excellent’ in all stages of the Long Term Athlete Development pathway.

Currently, clear talent pathways in some areas of the country do not exist and the English programmes staff will work with regions, sub-regions and clubs to develop

them. This process of creating the pathways will be overseen by the RTDC and Regional Development Officers at regional and sub-regional level with accreditation and re-accreditation at Swim 21, linked to demonstrated support of the talent pathways.

The ASA realise that, in some areas of the country, there are not enough Performance programmes and recently, has submitted applications for talent funding from Sport England to support clubs aspiring to be Performance and competitive development clubs, in areas of the country that are not currently served. Allied to this initiative, we are looking to create more opportunities for coaches who have “performance” aspirations and potential to realise them within “performance” environments.

It is important that every club plays it's part in developing English talent and is recognised for the role it plays. At Performance club level, it is expected that these programmes will take on additional responsibilities for helping develop the “family” of clubs within their sub-region. This will include the establishment of a co-ordinated programme of educational opportunities for Teachers, Coaches, Team Managers, Officials, Support staff to NVQ 2 or 3.

### **Beacon Clubs**

The ASA has also applied for funding to develop eight regional “Beacon Clubs” - one per region. This development will be incorporated within existing club programmes and enhance existing provision for each of these clubs. These programmes must have a 50m pool with 23+ hours of pool space, six hours of gym access, world class coaching staff and a vertical management structure, which is linked to developing swimmers from Fundamentals through to International level.

They must be located within 50m pools and it is envisaged that they will have a regional responsibility for providing basic support services for “identified athletes” at the other performance programmes within their region. Furthermore, they will have a key role in developing educational programmes not only their sub-region, but also for the whole region. The development of new sports scientists, team managers and officials for the national programme is key to the success of our sport and the Beacon programmes will be an element in meeting this need.

Part of the role of the Beacon club will be to innovate and develop new initiatives for English swimming and will be expected to have strong partnerships with Higher/Further Education, Sports Colleges, etc.

We envisage develop the first of these Beacon programmes from mid- 2007, with a phased introduction across every ASA region.

### **Summary**

The first year of the English Talent Development programme will be focussed on establishing the Regional & National Talent clinics and camps. It is committed to continuing development via the delivery of the AASE programme for 16-19 year olds. The ASA will work to develop a comprehensive network of clubs, creating effective talent pathways for swimmers and staff with every region covered with a number of performance club networks, supported by a Beacon programme. The aim is to develop stronger English performance club networks; to provide increased opportunities for athletes, coaches and support staff, develop new technologies and practices for our sport to give British swimmers an advantage on the world level.

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